

more than 2,000 rural communities in the United States are designated as having a shortage of healthcare professionals. Recruitment and retention of experienced professionals, including primary care physicians, is an ongoing challenge.

That is why I am a proud sponsor of H.R. 5641, the State Offices of Rural Health Reauthorization Bill of 2018. This legislation benefits States by increasing annual funding and reauthorizing vital programs for rural Americans for the first time since the 1990s. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this piece of legislation today.

Another issue that has ravaged our rural communities is the opioid epidemic. It continues to leave even more rural Americans in need of crucial health services.

Adolescents and young adults living in rural areas are more vulnerable to opioid abuse than their urban counterparts. The prevalence of fatal drug overdoses has skyrocketed in rural areas. High unemployment and a greater rate of the types of injuries that result in prescriptions for opioid medications have contributed to this.

There are ways to increase treatment options. As a part of the VA MISSION Act, which was signed into law in June, I included a provision that expands healthcare access for our veterans through telemedicine. We now allow VA-credentialed healthcare providers to practice telemedicine across State lines.

Mr. Speaker, our veterans should receive the best care possible no matter where they are located and where they live. With advances in technology, we see new opportunities for veterans to obtain coverage through telemedicine, especially in some of our most rural areas.

For those in rural regions, the need is great and services are scarce. Let us all recognize and celebrate the power of our vibrant rural communities in the face of these grave challenges.

As we celebrate National Rural Health Day today, it is my hope that we continue to strive for a 21st century healthcare system that works for everyone in America. Thanks to technology, we have the opportunity to expand services, regardless of where one resides, and all Americans deserve no less.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 20 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro

tempore (Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: God of mercy, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Bless the Members of the people's House with focus and purpose as they gather these few days before Thanksgiving. May their efforts give true cause for Americans to gather to give thanks.

In our world, there are many places where peace is lacking and cause for thanksgiving rare. Send Your spirit of peace upon our world. Help us all see in those we view as enemies our brothers and sisters.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

55TH ANNIVERSARY OF DADE COUNTY POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to congratulate the Dade County Police Benevolent Association on the celebration of its 55th anniversary.

Since its founding in 1963, the Dade County PBA has worked to protect the rights of Miami-Dade's finest, working tirelessly to serve as a voice of reason, of guidance, and of professionalism. From providing legal assistance to members in times of need, to assisting members and their families who may be struggling with PTSD, this organi-

zation is committed to serving those who protect and serve us.

I represent some of the finest police officers that our Nation has to offer, and the Dade County Police Benevolent Association will always have their back.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Dade County Police Benevolent Association for its extraordinary work in our community, and I wish this organization the utmost congratulations on this extraordinary milestone.

Here is to the next 55 years, PBA.

MILITARY APPRECIATION WEEK

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, Penn State University recently hosted its Military Appreciation Week, and this year's theme honored 100 years of women who answered the call to duty.

Women have played a role in every major war in United States history, and their contributions have continuously evolved over time; and today, women now serve in nearly every combat role in the United States Armed Forces around the world.

During World War I, nearly 30,000 women enlisted as nurses, clerks, and telephone operators. Dating as far back as the American Revolutionary War, women volunteered as nurses, spies, cooks, ammunition carriers, water bearers, and more.

To kick things off, the Nittany Lions football team defeated Iowa on Saturday, October 27, for the Military Appreciation Game.

Over the course of 2 weeks, Penn State continued to host several numerous events and festivities to recognize servicemembers, veterans, and military families. The celebrations continued through Monday, when we observed Veterans Day.

Mr. Speaker, these annual military appreciation events give all Penn Staters and community members a chance to honor those who bravely served our country, and we are grateful for all of our American heroes.

RECOGNIZING ELDON "TWIRP" WILLIAMS

(Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life and legacy of Eldon "Twirp" Williams, whose life was tragically ended last month at the age of 87.

Endearingly known as "Twirp" by those throughout the Riverbend community, he had been involved in local government for more than 60 years.

In 1957, Twirp was appointed as Godfrey Township assessor, a position he held until 1997. In 1999, he was elected